CREATURES ON THE LOOSE
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CREATURES ON THE LOOSE™

FEATURING

THONGOR™

WARRIOR OF THE LOST LAND!

AGAINST THE HORDES OF HELL!

IN THE GREAT TRADITION OF CONAN!

STAN LEE presents

A

Adventure

STan Lee PRESENTS: THONGOR, WARRIOR OF THE LOST LAND! ™
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ADAPTED FROM "THE WIZARD OF LEMURIA" BY LIN CARTER, CREATOR OF THONGOR
MOUNTAIN OF THUNDER!
THE DUNGEONS OF PATANGA: HERE, TO THIS DARK, GREY-WALLED HELL, THE ARMORED GUARDS OF THE CITY'S DRUID MASTERS BRING TWO BLASPHEMERS--
--TWO WHO DARED ENTER THE CRYPTS OF THE PATANGAN GOD YAMATH AND THERE DID FORGE A SWORD UPON THE GOD'S ETERNAL FLAME.
THOSE TWO ARE THE AGED WIZARD SHARAJSHA-- AND THE BARBARIAN YOUTH THONGOR--

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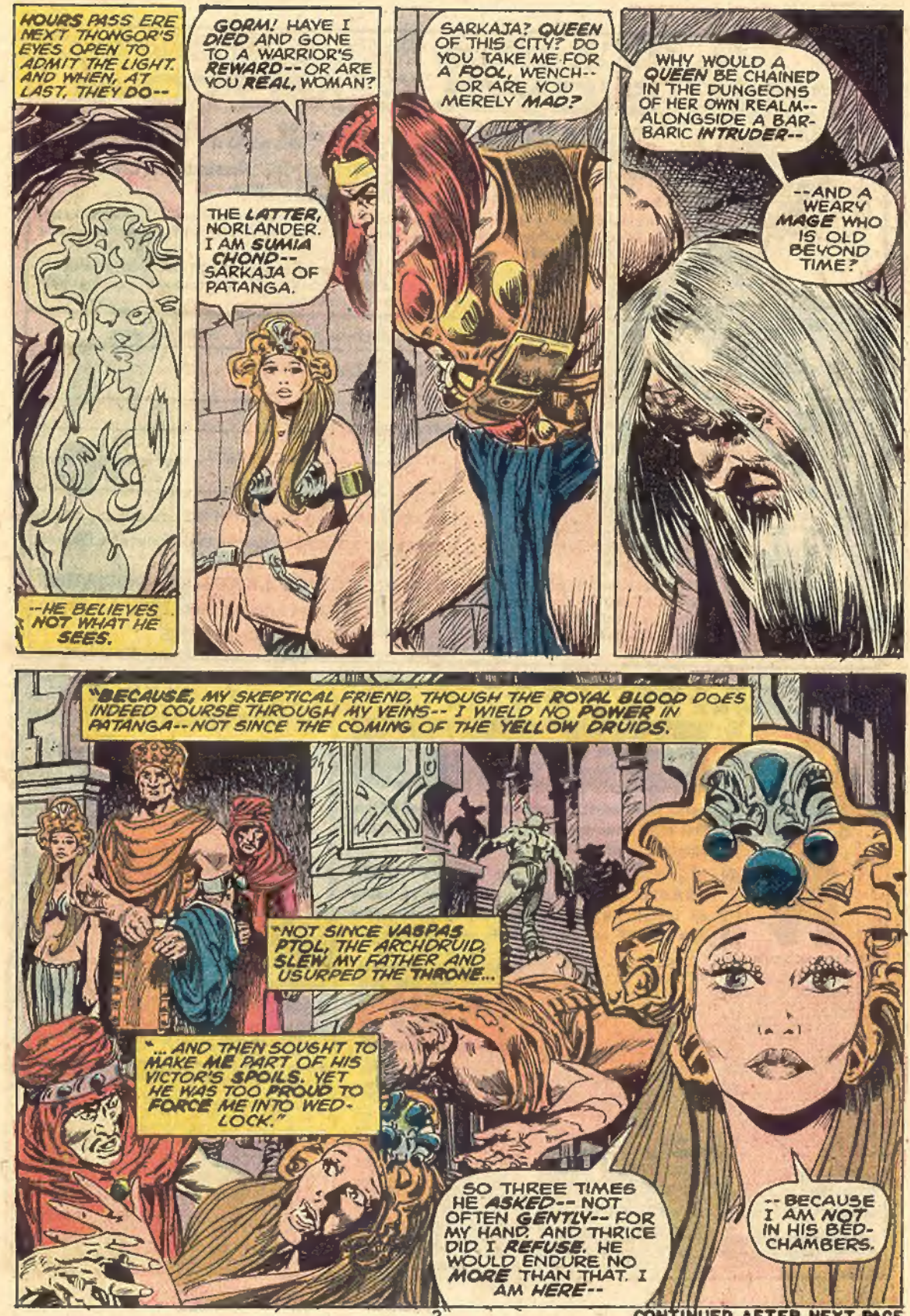
--AND THEY HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH!
CHAIN THE YOUTH TIGHTLY 'GAINST YON WALL!
HE WILL BE DANGEROUS WHEN HE WAKES!
"WHEN," DID YOU SAY, DOG?
BY THE BEARD OF MY MOTHER! HE SPEAKS!!
THE SLEEP VAPORS HAVE LOST THEIR HOLD ON HIM!
AYE-- FIRST THE VAPORS, AND NOW, YOU, TOO, STEEL-CLAD SWINE!
IT TAKES MORE THAN SULLEN PERFUME--
--TO HOLD A VALKARTHAN WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE HELD!
AND STILL MORE THAN THAT-- IF HE IS ANGRY!
WHATEVER YOU SAY, OUTLANDER!
UNNGH
NOW--BIND HIM SECURELY! IF HE IS VALKARTHAN, NOT EVEN SUCH A BLOW AS THAT WILL KEEP HIM UNDER FOR LONG.
WHO IS THIS-- THIS SAVAGE?
IF HE HAS A NAME, WE KNOW IT NOT. NOR DOES IT MUCH MATTER.
LIKE YOU, SARKAJA, HE WILL BE DEAD BEFORE THE MORN!


HOURS PASS ERE NEXT THONGOR'S EYES OPEN TO ADMIT THE LIGHT. AND WHEN, AT LAST, THEY DO--
--HE BELIEVES NOT WHAT HE SEES.
GORM! HAVE I DIED AND GONE TO A WARRIOR'S REWARD--OR ARE YOU REAL, WOMAN?
THE LATTER, NORLANDER. I AM SUMIA CHOND--SARKAJA OF PATANGA.
SARKAJA? QUEEN OF THIS CITY? DO YOU TAKE ME FOR A FOOL, WENCH--OR ARE YOU MERELY MAD?
WHY WOULD A QUEEN BE CHAINED IN THE DUNGEONS OF HER OWN REALM--ALONGSIDE A BARBARIC INTRUDER--
--AND A WEARY MAGE WHO IS OLD BEYOND TIME?
"BECAUSE, MY SKEPTICAL FRIEND, THOUGH THE ROYAL BLOOD DOES INDEED COURSE THROUGH MY VEINS--I WIELD NO POWER IN PATANGA--NOT SINCE THE COMING OF THE YELLOW DRUIDS.
"NOT SINCE VAGPAS PTOL, THE ARCHDRUID, SLEW MY FATHER AND USURPED THE THRONE...
"...AND THEN SOUGHT TO MAKE ME PART OF HIS VICTOR'S SPOILS. YET HE WAS TOO PROUD TO FORCE ME INTO WEDLOCK."
SO THREE TIMES HE ASKED--NOT OFTEN GENTLY--FOR MY HAND. AND THRICE DID I REFUSE. HE WOULD ENDURE NO MORE THAN THAT. I AM HERE--
--BECAUSE I AM NOT IN HIS BEDCHAMBERS.

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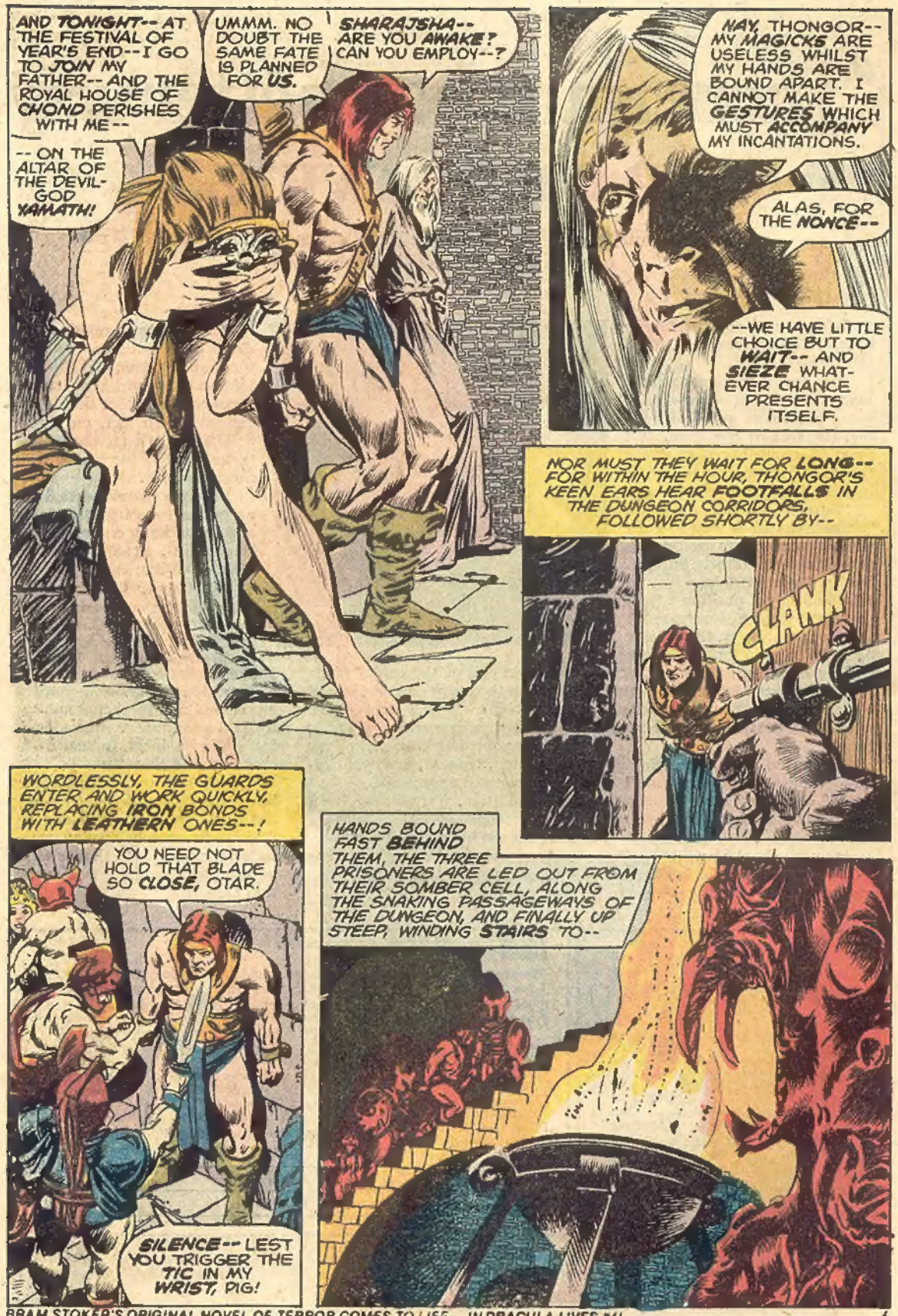
AND TONIGHT-- AT THE FESTIVAL OF YEAR'S END--I GO TO JOIN MY FATHER-- AND THE ROYAL HOUSE OF CHOND PERISHES WITH ME--
UMMM. NO DOUBT THE SAME FATE IS PLANNED FOR US.
SHARAJSHA-- ARE YOU AWAKE? CAN YOU EMPLOY--?
-- ON THE ALTAR OF THE DEVIL-GOD YAMATH!
NAY, THONGOR-- MY MAGICKS ARE USELESS WHILST MY HANDS ARE BOUND APART. I CANNOT MAKE THE GESTURES WHICH MUST ACCOMPANY MY INCANTATIONS.
ALAS, FOR THE NONCE--
--WE HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO WAIT-- AND SIEZE WHATEVER CHANCE PRESENTS ITSELF.
NOR MUST THEY WAIT FOR LONG-- FOR WITHIN THE HOUR, THONGOR'S KEEN EARS HEAR FOOTFALLS IN THE DUNGEON CORRIDORS, FOLLOWED SHORTLY BY--
CLANK
WORDLESSLY, THE GUARDS ENTER AND WORK QUICKLY, REPLACING IRON BONDS WITH LEATHERN ONES--!
YOU NEED NOT HOLD THAT BLADE SO CLOSE, OTAR.
SILENCE-- LEST YOU TRIGGER THE TIC IN MY WRIST, PIG!
HANDS BOUND FAST BEHIND THEM, THE THREE PRISONERS ARE LED OUT FROM THEIR SOMBER CELL, ALONG THE SNAKING PASSAGEWAYS OF THE DUNGEON, AND FINALLY UP STEEP, WINDING STAIRS TO--

THE ALTAR OF YAMATH!! GORM--!
INVOKE NOT THE NAME OF THAT FALSE GOD HERE, BARBARIAN.
YAMATH IS LORD OVER PATANGA-- AND I, VASAAS PTOL, AM HIS PROPHET!
TAKE THEM TO THEIR PLACES.
ALL BUT SUMIA.
BRING HER TO ME! SHE IS, AFTER ALL, OUR SARKAJA--
--AND MY CHOSEN ONE.
RATHER WOULD I BE WED WITH A SNAKE-- THAN FEEL YOUR MIRY HANDS UPON ME!
AND YET... THOSE SAME HANDS NOW HOLD YOUR LIFE, SUMIA.
YOU NEED ONLY CONSENT TO BECOME MY--
PHAT
SHE HAS MADE HER CHOICE. ESCORT HER TO THE ALTAR!

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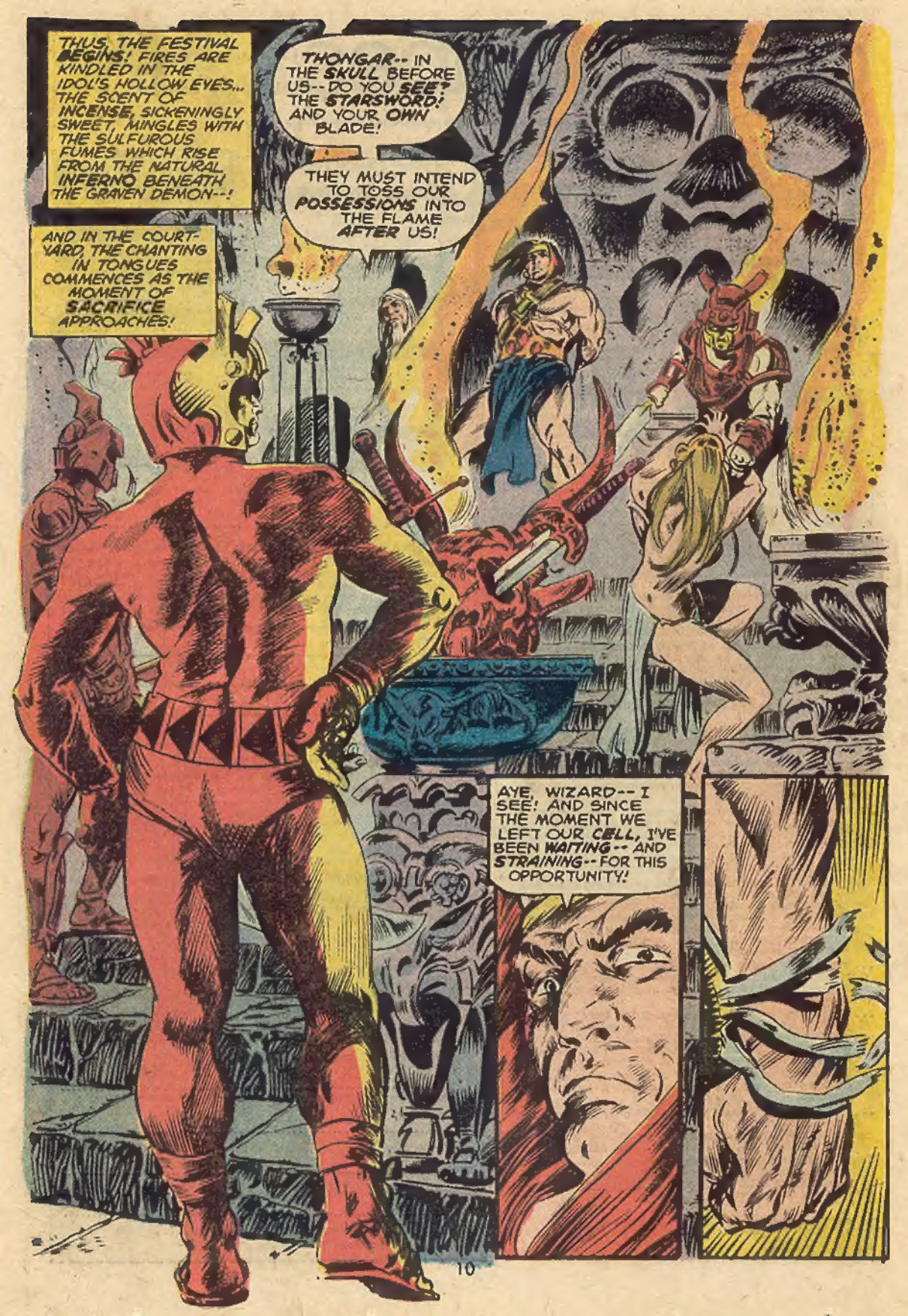
THUS, THE FESTIVAL BEGINS! FIRES ARE KINDLED IN THE IDOL'S HOLLOW EYES... THE SCENT OF INCENSE, SICKENINGLY SWEET, MINGLES WITH THE SULFUROUS FUMES WHICH RISE FROM THE NATURAL INFERNO BENEATH THE GRAVEN DEMON--!
THONGAR-- IN THE SKULL BEFORE US-- DO YOU SEE? THE STARSWORD! AND YOUR OWN BLADE!
THEY MUST INTEND TO TOSS OUR POSSESSIONS INTO THE FLAME AFTER US!
AND IN THE COURTYARD, THE CHANTING IN TONGUES COMMENCES AS THE MOMENT OF SACRIFICE APPROACHES!
AYE, WIZARD-- I SEE! AND SINCE THE MOMENT WE LEFT OUR CELL, I'VE BEEN WAITING-- AND STRAINING-- FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY!

ON YOUR KNEES, CUR! PRAY TO YOUR DEVIL FOR STRONGER LEATHER!
NO! YOU CAN'T BE FREE! GUARDS!
THESE CITY-BRED CURS WERE ALL TOO COURAGEOUS--
--WHILE I WAS BOUND-- UNARMED!
NOW I'LL TEST THEIR TRUE METTLE!
HERE, QUEEN! FREE THE WIZARD WITH THIS-- AND DEFEND YOUR-SELF--
--WHILE I BLAZE US A PATH THROUGH THESE VERMIN!
BY THE NINETEEN GODS--WE'LL ESCAPE YET!
YOU FOOLS! CUT THE SAVAGE DOWN! HE'S BUT ONE MAN-- WHILE YOU ARE MANY--WITH YAMATH AT YOUR SIDE!
AYE, ARCHDRUID-- IT'S A FAIR ENOUGH FIGHT! AN ENTIRE LEGION AND ONE IDIOT GOD--

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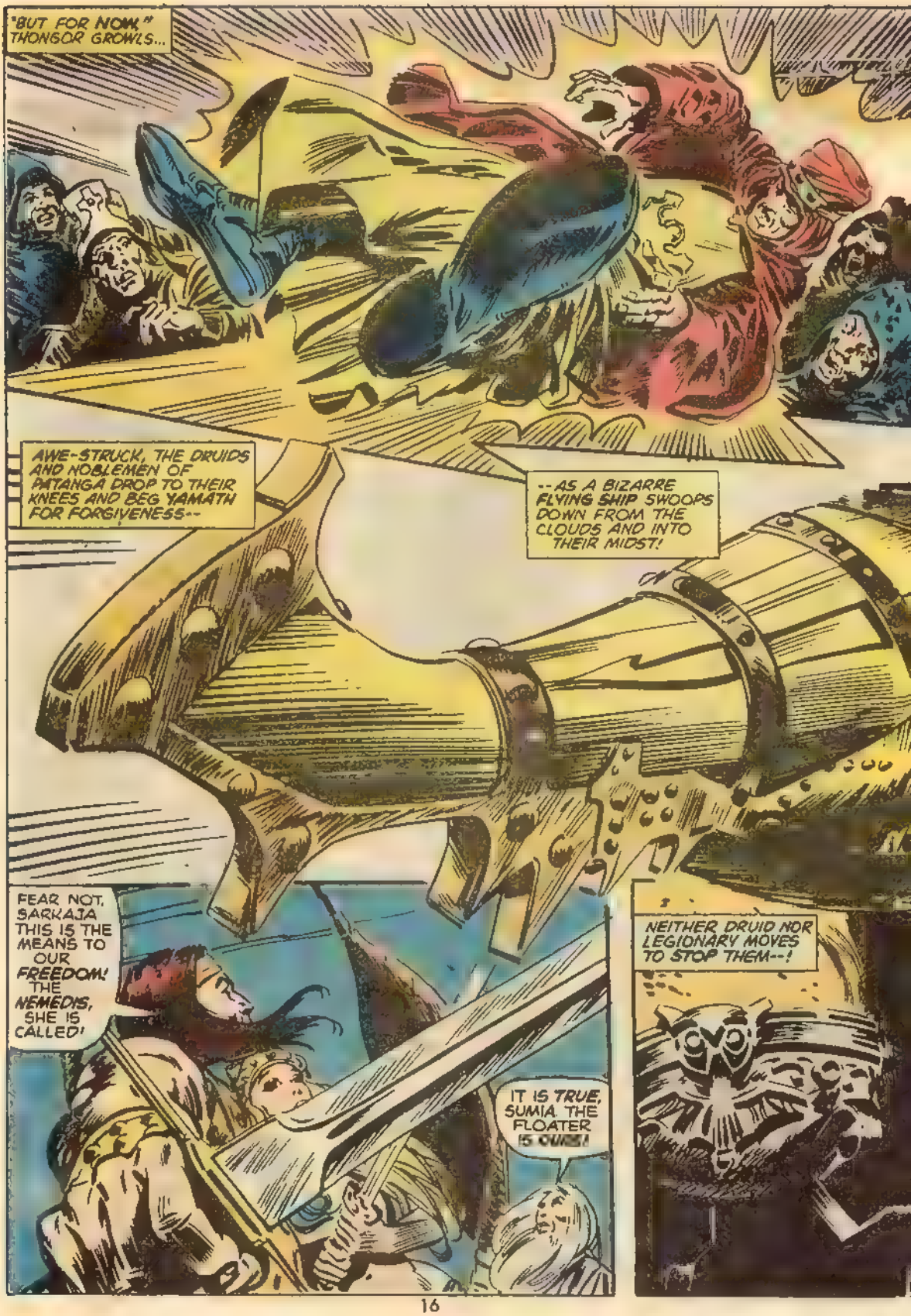
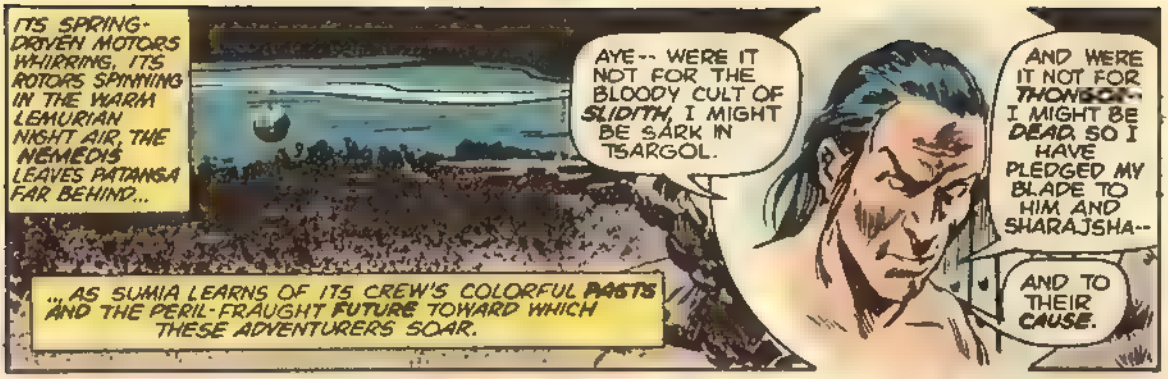
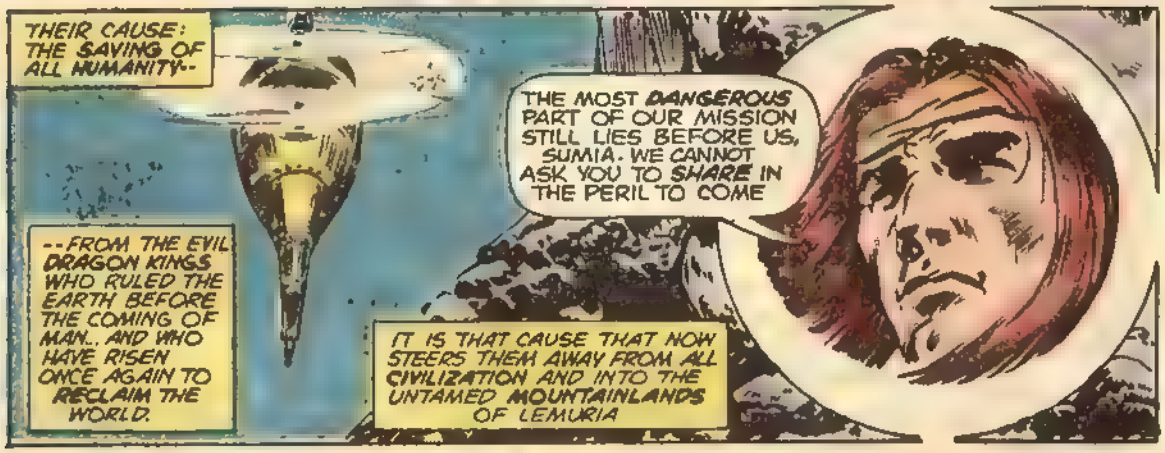
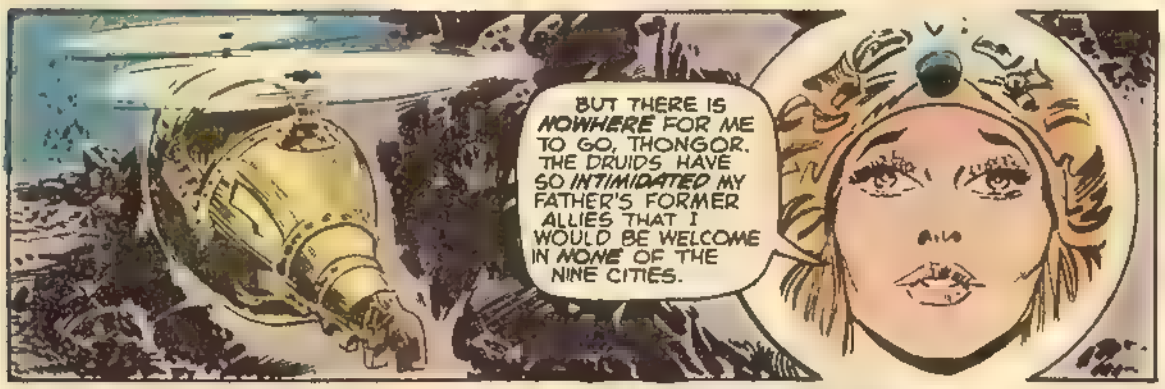
--AGAINST A LONE VALKARTHAN BLADESMAN!
YOU MAY YET TEACH ME TO APPRECIATE SORCERY, SHARAJSHA--
AH, BUT YOU ARE NOT ALONE, LAD! WITH MY HANDS FREE, I CAN BE OF SERVICE!
--AT LEAST, WHEN IT'S ON MY SIDE!
AND NOW, VASPAS PTOL--WE COME TO YOU. PERHAPS WE WON'T ESCAPE PERHAPS WE CAN-NOT DEFEAT ALL THE PATANGAN LEGIONS--!
BUT ONE TO ONE-- MAN TO MAN-- I CAN CRUSH YOU, DRUID!
BREAK YOU WITH MY BARE HANDS!

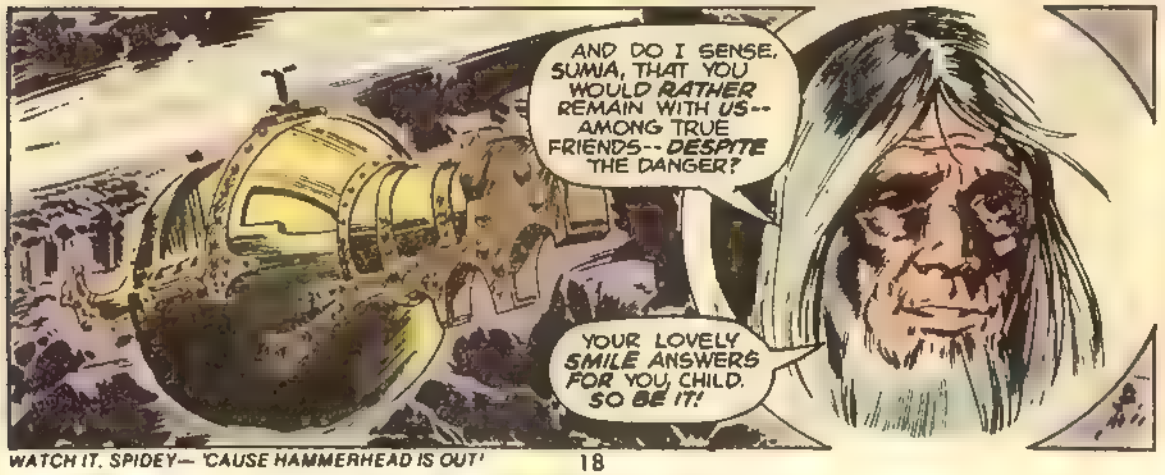

"BUT FOR NOW," THONGOR GROWLS...
AWE-STRUCK, THE DRUIDS AND NOBLEMEN OF PATANGA DROP TO THEIR KNEES AND BEG YAMATH FOR FORGIVENESS--
--AS A BIZARRE FLYING SHIP SWOOPS DOWN FROM THE CLOUDS AND INTO THEIR MIDST!
FEAR NOT, SARKAJA THIS IS THE MEANS TO OUR FREEDOM! THE NEMEDIS, SHE IS CALLED!
IT IS TRUE, SUMIA. THE FLOATER IS OURS!
NEITHER DRUID NOR LEGIONARY MOVES TO STOP THEM--!

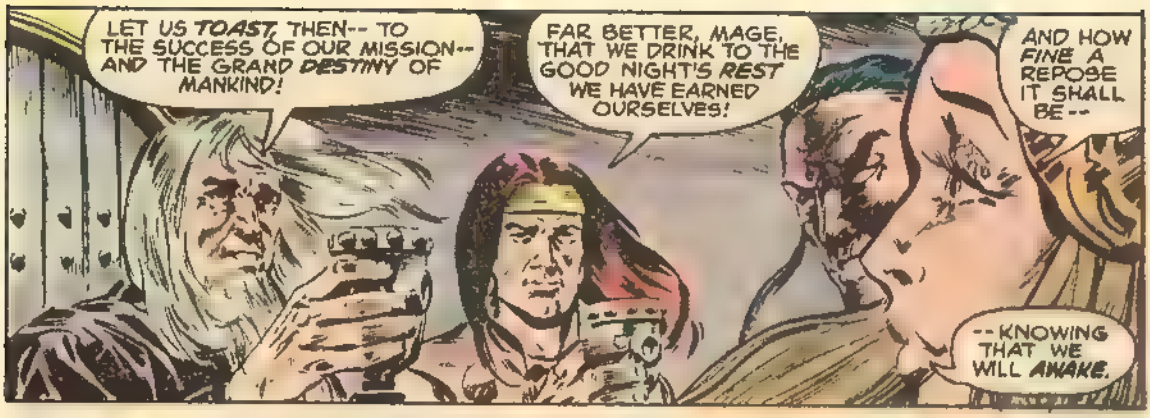
"YOU'LL SERVE BETTER AS A LIVING WEAPON-- TO SCATTER YOUR OWN DRUID HORDE!"
VESPAS PTOL LANDS SHAKEN, BUT UNHARMED. YET, BEFORE HE CAN RISE TO RALLY HIS MEN--!
BEHOLD, PRIESTLY BRETHREN! A VENGEFUL GOD DESCENDS FROM THE FIRMAMENT! WE ARE ALL OF US DAMNED!
BUT, 'TIS NO SPIRIT AT THE HELM. RATHER, IT IS--
KARM KARVUS! AND ABOUT TIME!
TOSS US THE ROPE LADDER, MAN!
MEET OUR CREW'S OTHER DEPOSED MONARCH SUMIA THIS IS KARM KARVUS--PRINCE OF TSARGOL
SUMIA? SUMIA CHOND-- SARKAJA OF PATANGA? WELL--!
WELL?
THEY MERELY LOOK ON, GAPING IN DREAD, AS THE THREE CLIMB TOWARD THE SKY-BOAT.

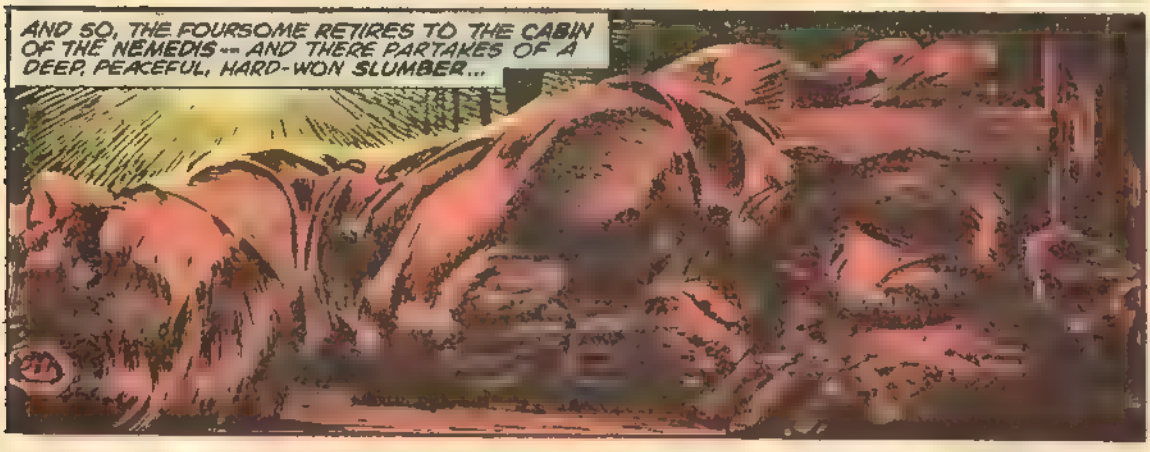

ITS SPRING-DRIVEN MOTORS WHIRRING, ITS ROTORS SPINNING IN THE WARM LEMURIAN NIGHT AIR, THE NEMEDIS LEAVES PATANGA FAR BEHIND...
AYE-- WERE IT NOT FOR THE BLOODY CULT OF SLIDITH, I MIGHT BE SARK IN TSARGOL.
AND WERE IT NOT FOR THONGOR-- I MIGHT BE DEAD. SO I HAVE PLEDGED MY BLADE TO HIM AND SHARAJSHA--
AND TO THEIR CAUSE.
...AS SUMIA LEARNS OF ITS CREW'S COLORFUL PASTS AND THE PERIL-FRAUGHT FUTURE TOWARD WHICH THESE ADVENTURERS SOAR.

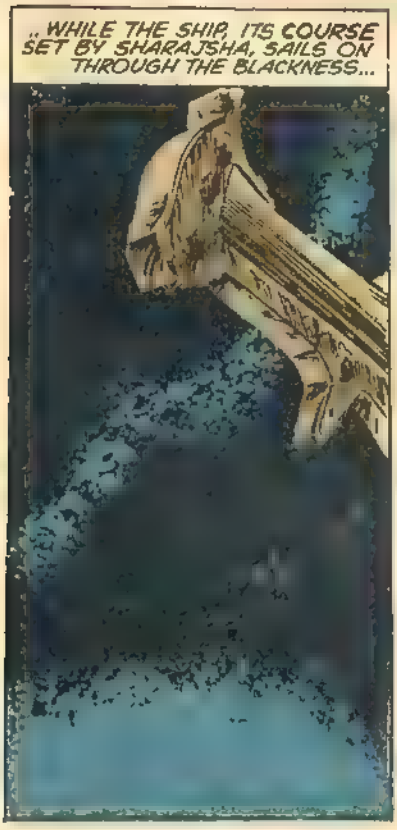

THEIR CAUSE: THE SAVING OF ALL HUMANITY--
THE MOST DANGEROUS PART OF OUR MISSION STILL LIES BEFORE US, SUMIA. WE CANNOT ASK YOU TO SHARE IN THE PERIL TO COME
--FROM THE EVIL DRAGON KINGS WHO RULED THE EARTH BEFORE THE COMING OF MAN.. AND WHO HAVE RISEN ONCE AGAIN TO RECLAIM THE WORLD.
IT IS THAT CAUSE THAT NOW STEERS THEM AWAY FROM ALL CIVILIZATION AND INTO THE UNTAMED MOUNTAINLANDS OF LEMURIA

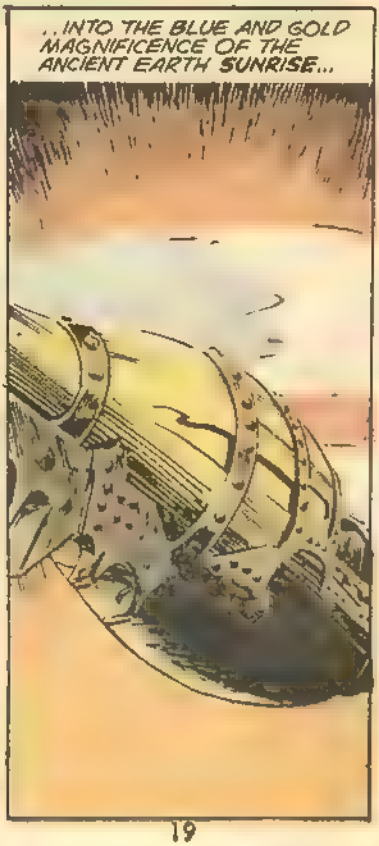

BUT THERE IS NOWHERE FOR ME TO GO, THONGOR. THE DRUIDS HAVE SO INTIMIDATED MY FATHER'S FORMER ALLIES THAT I WOULD BE WELCOME IN NONE OF THE NINE CITIES.


AND DO I SENSE, SUMIA, THAT YOU WOULD RATHER REMAIN WITH US-- AMONG TRUE FRIENDS-- DESPITE THE DANGER?
YOUR LOVELY SMILE ANSWERS FOR YOU, CHILD. SO BE IT!


LET US TOAST, THEN-- TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR MISSION-- AND THE GRAND DESTINY OF MANKIND!
FAR BETTER, MAGE, THAT WE DRINK TO THE GOOD NIGHT'S REST WE HAVE EARNED OURSELVES!
AND HOW FINE A REPOSE IT SHALL BE--
--KNOWING THAT WE WILL AWAKE.







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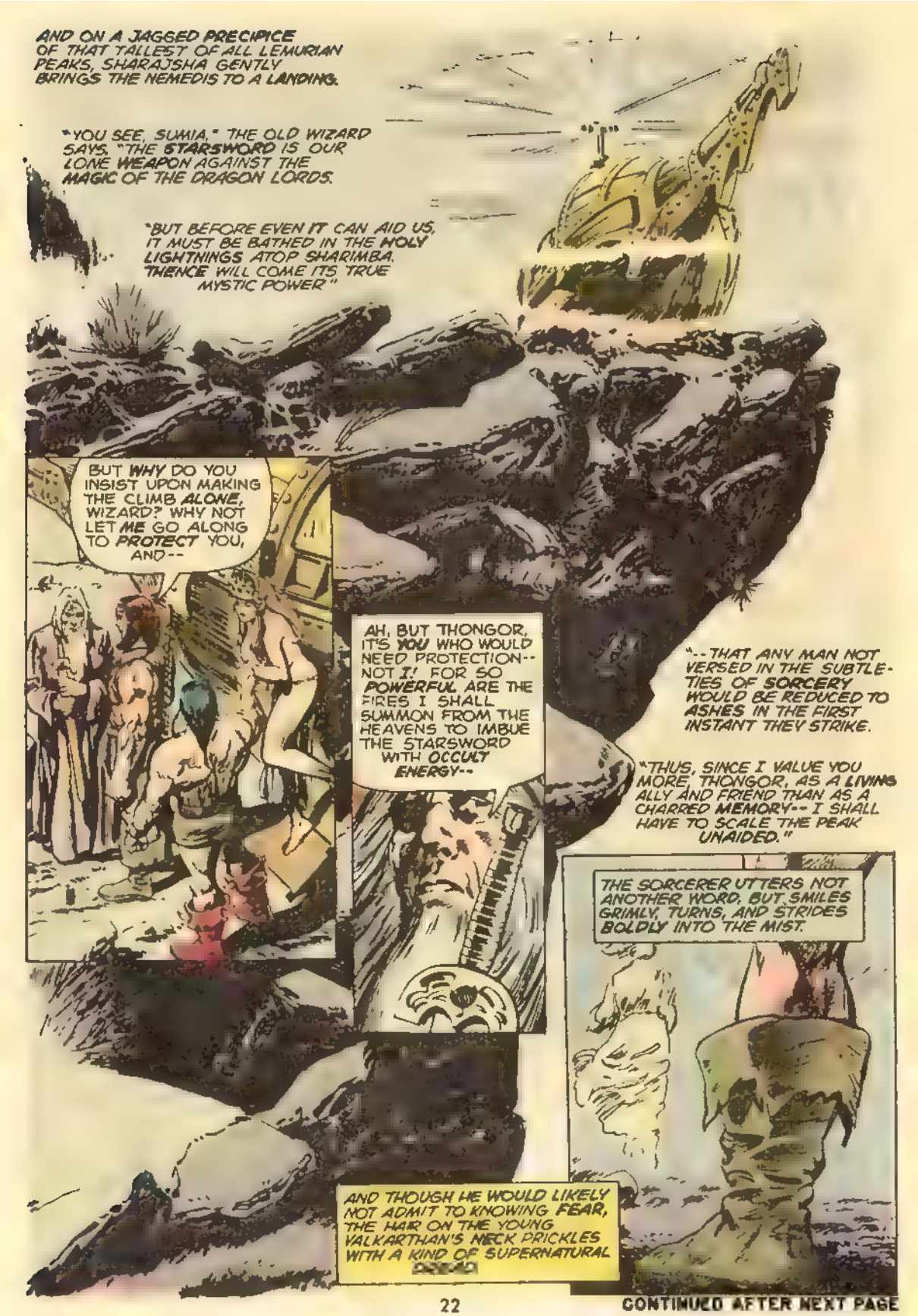
AND ON A JAGGED PRECIPICE OF THAT TALLEST OF ALL LEMURIAN PEAKS, SHARAJSHA GENTLY BRINGS THE NEMEDIS TO A LANDING.
"YOU SEE, SUMIA," THE OLD WIZARD SAYS, "THE STARSWORD IS OUR LONE WEAPON AGAINST THE MAGIC OF THE DRAGON LORDS.
"BUT BEFORE EVEN IT CAN AID US, IT MUST BE BATHED IN THE HOLY LIGHTNINGS ATOP SHARIMBA. THENCE WILL COME ITS TRUE MYSTIC POWER"
BUT WHY DO YOU INSIST UPON MAKING THE CLIMB ALONE, WIZARD? WHY NOT LET ME GO ALONG TO PROTECT YOU, AND--
AH, BUT THONGOR, IT'S YOU WHO WOULD NEED PROTECTION-- NOT I! FOR SO POWERFUL ARE THE FIRES I SHALL SUMMON FROM THE HEAVENS TO IMBUE THE STARSWORD WITH OCCULT ENERGY--
"--THAT ANY MAN NOT VERSED IN THE SUBTLETIES OF SORCERY WOULD BE REDUCED TO ASHES IN THE FIRST INSTANT THEY STRIKE.
"THUS, SINCE I VALUE YOU MORE, THONGOR, AS A LIVING ALLY AND FRIEND THAN AS A CHARRED MEMORY-- I SHALL HAVE TO SCALE THE PEAK UNAIDED."
THE SORCERER UTTERS NOT ANOTHER WORD, BUT SMILES GRIMLY, TURNS, AND STRIDES BOLDLY INTO THE MIST.
AND THOUGH HE WOULD LIKELY NOT ADMIT TO KNOWING FEAR, THE HAIR ON THE YOUNG VALKARTHAN'S NECK PRICKLES WITH A KIND OF SUPERNATURAL DREAD

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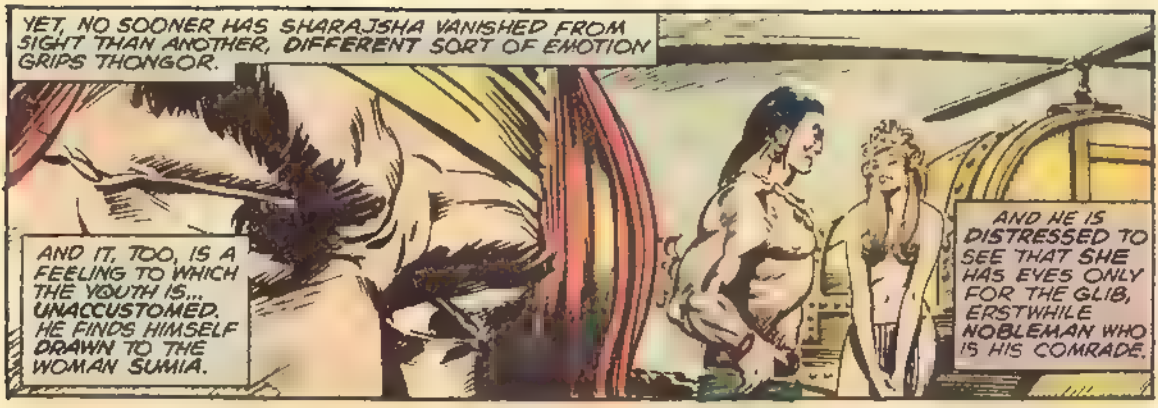
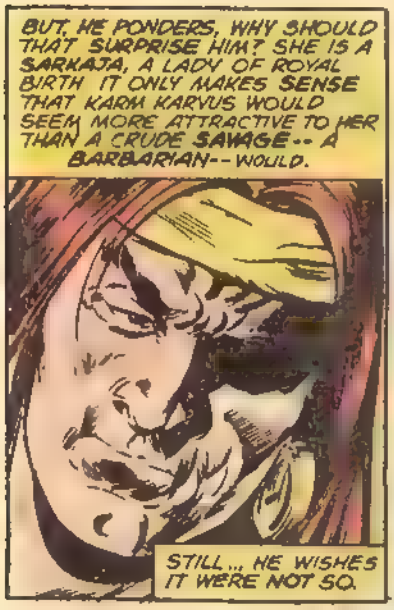
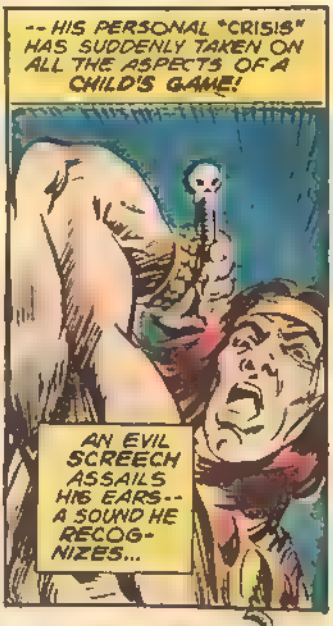
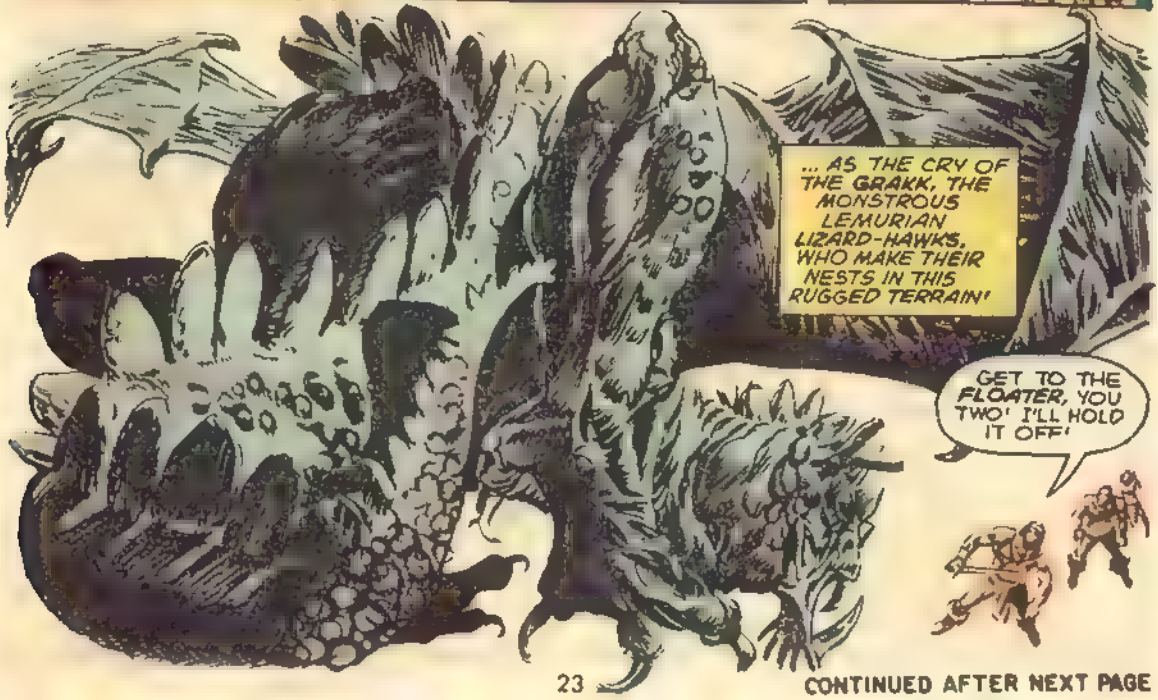

YET, NO SOONER HAS SHARAJSHA VANISHED FROM SIGHT THAN ANOTHER, DIFFERENT SORT OF EMOTION GRIPS THONGOR.
AND IT, TOO, IS A FEELING TO WHICH THE YOUTH IS... UNACCUSTOMED. HE FINDS HIMSELF DRAWN TO THE WOMAN SUMIA.
AND HE IS DISTRESSED TO SEE THAT SHE HAS EYES ONLY FOR THE GLIB, ERSTWHILE NOBLEMAN WHO IS HIS COMRADE.


BUT, HE PONDERS, WHY SHOULD THAT SURPRISE HIM? SHE IS A SARKAJA, A LADY OF ROYAL BIRTH. IT ONLY MAKES SENSE THAT KARM KARVUS WOULD SEEM MORE ATTRACTIVE TO HER THAN A CRUDE SAVAGE -- A BARBARIAN -- WOULD.
STILL... HE WISHES IT WERE NOT SO.


-- HIS PERSONAL "CRISIS" HAS SUDDENLY TAKEN ON ALL THE ASPECTS OF A CHILD'S GAME!
AN EVIL SCREECH ASSAILS HIS EARS -- A SOUND HE RECOG-NIZES...


... AS THE CRY OF THE GRAKK, THE MONSTROUS LEMURIAN LIZARD-HAWKS, WHO MAKE THEIR NESTS IN THIS RUGGED TERRAIN!
GET TO THE FLOATER, YOU TWO! I'LL HOLD IT OFF!

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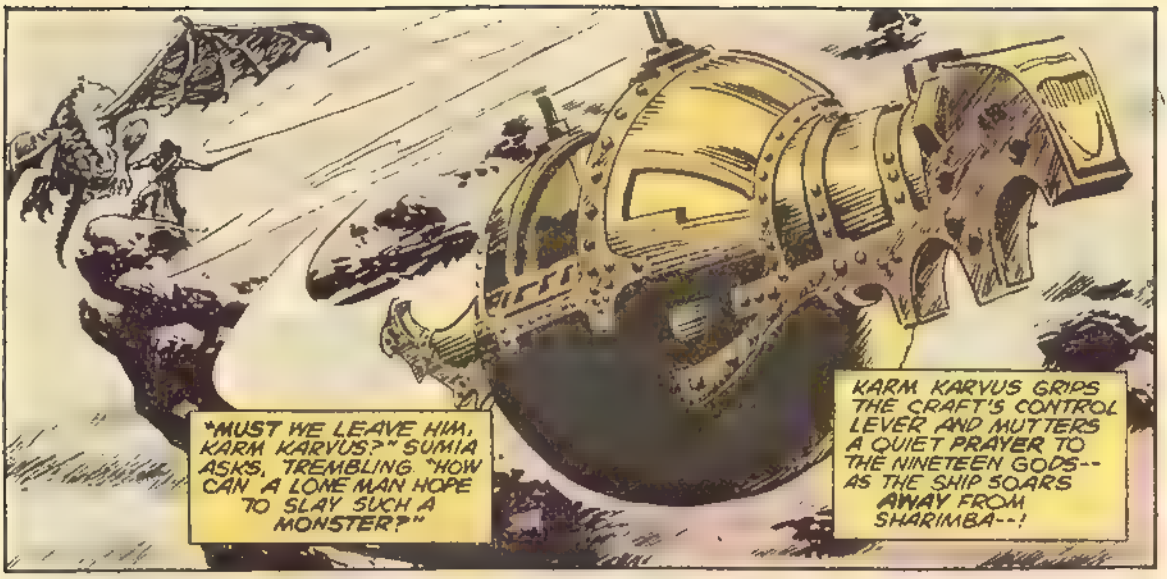
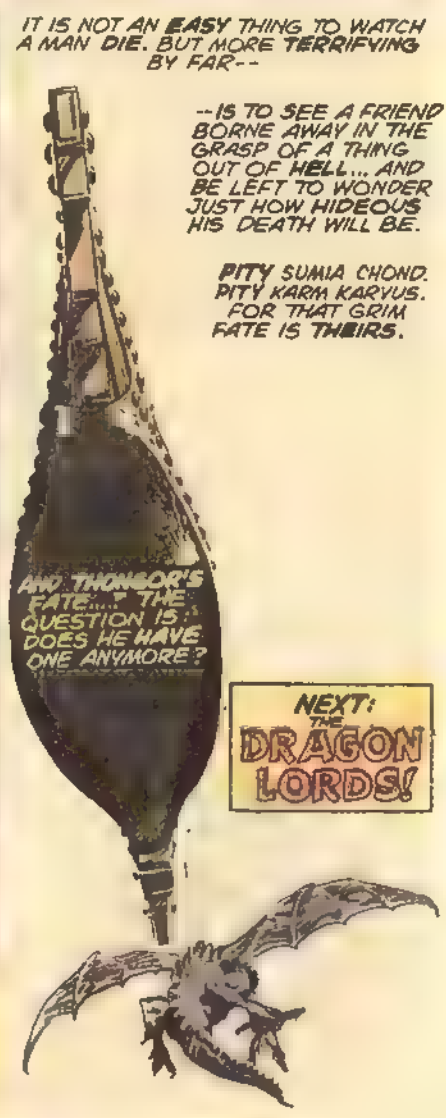
BUT, SUMIA, PARALYZED WITH FEAR, CANNOT RUN-- AND KARM KARVUS, FEARING FOR THONGOR'S LIFE, HESITATES. UNTIL--
-- THE LIZARD-HAWK STRIKES!
ARE YOU DEAF, MAN? I ORDERED YOU TO THE SHIP! TAKE THE GIRL AND GO!
IF WE BOTH DIE, THE DRAGON-LORDS HAVE WON-- DON'T YOU SEE?
LIKE IT OR NOT-- WE HAVE A DUTY-- TO SHARAJSHA-- AND ALL WHO LIVE!
KARM KARVUS DOES NOT LIKE IT. BUT NONETHELESS, HE FLEES WITH SUMIA TO THE NEMEDIS--
--AND IN MOMENTS, ITS RO)ORS COME TO WHIRLING LIFE O,CE MORE!
NOW, KARM KARVUS-- TAKE TO THE AIR WHILE YOU MAY! YOU CAN RETURN FOR ME!
UNLESS FATHER GORM WILLS IT OTHERWISE-- I DON'T PLAN TO DIE!


"MUST WE LEAVE HIM, KARM KARVUS?" SUMIA ASKS, TREMBLING. "HOW CAN A LONE MAN HOPE TO SLAY SUCH A MONSTER?"
KARM KARVUS GRIPS THE CRAFT'S CONTROL LEVER AND MUTTERS A QUIET PRAYER TO THE NINETEEN GODS-- AS THE SHIP SOARS AWAY FROM SHARIMBA--!

THERE IS CAUSE TO WONDER WHETHER THE GODS ARE LISTENING THIS DAY. FOR BARELY HAS THE NEMEDIS FLED--
--WHEN THE GRAKK'S PONDEROUS SPIKED TAIL SLAMS AGAINST THONGOR'S BODY--!

AND HE FALLS.

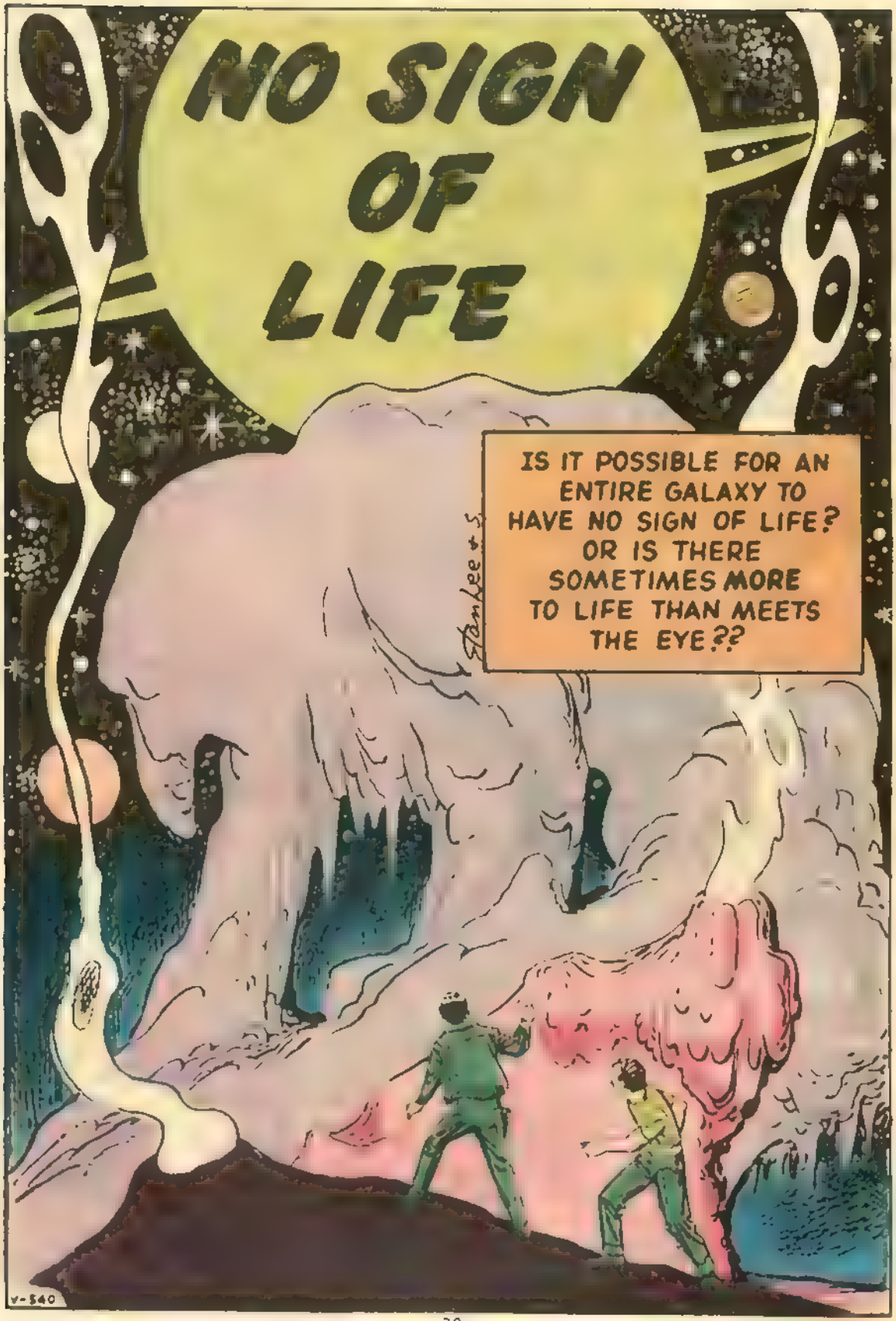
BUT NOT FAR. THE CLAWED FOOT OF THE LIZARD-HAWK CATCHES HIS PLUNGING FORM.


IT IS NOT AN EASY THING TO WATCH A MAN DIE. BUT MORE TERRIFYING BY FAR--
--IS TO SEE A FRIEND BORNE AWAY IN THE GRASP OF A THING OUT OF HELL... AND BE LEFT TO WONDER JUST HOW HIDEOUS HIS DEATH WILL BE.
PITY SUMIA CHOND. PITY KARM KARVUS. FOR THAT GRIM FATE IS THEIRS.
AND THONGOR'S FATE...? THE QUESTION IS: DOES HE HAVE ONE ANYMORE?
NEXT: THE DRAGON LORDS!

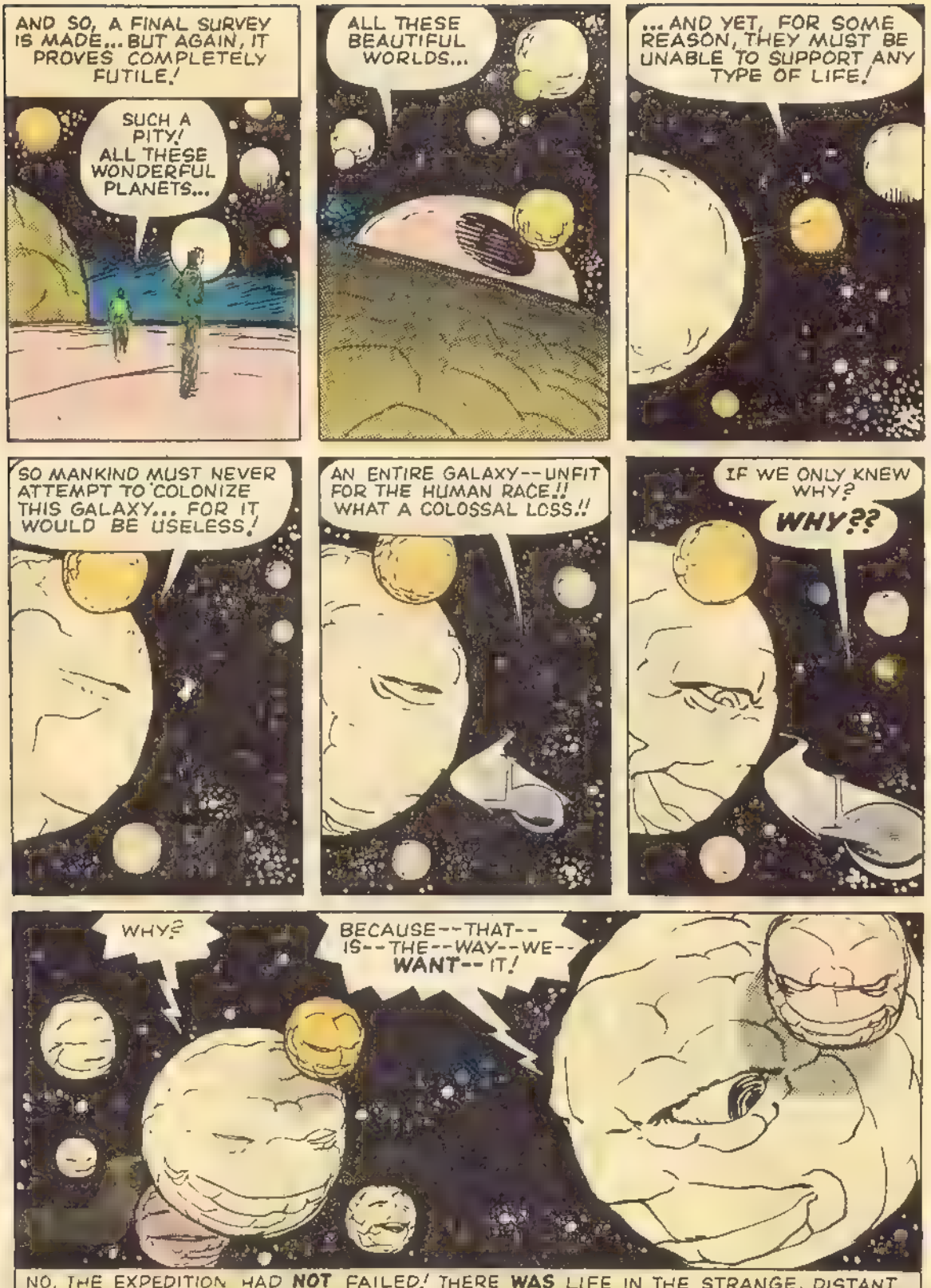
STAN LEE presents

A

Adventure


NO SIGN OF LIFE
IS IT POSSIBLE FOR AN ENTIRE GALAXY TO HAVE NO SIGN OF LIFE? OR IS THERE SOMETIMES MORE TO LIFE THAN MEETS THE EYE??
Stan Lee
V-540

YOU ARE GAZING AT... THE FUTURE!!
LET US DEPART, RONN!
YES! WE HAVE FINISHED SURVEYING THIS SECTION OF THE GALAXY!
...THE FUTURE, WHERE TEAMS OF HUMANS CONSTANTLY EXPLORE THE VAST, UNCHARTERED UNIVERSE!
IN ALL THIS GALAXY, WE HAVE FOUND NO SIGNS OF ANYTHING THAT LIVES!
STRANGE--
EVERY SECTION OF THE UNIVERSE HAS SOME FORMS OF LIFE!! WHY SHOULD THIS ONE BE DIFFERENT?
WHY... INDEED?
THOSE ASTEROID ARE THE ONLY ONES WE HAVE NOT YET EXPLORED...LET US INVESTIGATE THEM, TOO!
FOR IF WE FIND NO LIFE HERE, THEN WE MUST STRIKE THIS GALAXY OFF OUR LIST OF WORLDS FOR MANKIND TO COLONIZE!
JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHERS...
NOTHING! NOTHING ALIVE!
SLOWLY, PAINSTAKINGLY, THE STAR SHIP BLAZES FROM ASTEROID TO ASTEROID, BUT THE RESULT IS ALWAYS THE SAME...
NO SIGN OF LIFE... ANYWHERE!
WE MUST ADMIT IT, RONN! THIS GALAXY IS OUR FIRST FAILURE!
BEFORE WE DEPART... LET US SEARCH ONE LAST TIME!
2


AND SO, A FINAL SURVEY IS MADE... BUT AGAIN, IT PROVES COMPLETELY FUTILE!
SUCH A PITY! ALL THESE WONDERFUL PLANETS...
ALL THESE BEAUTIFUL WORLDS...
...AND YET, FOR SOME REASON, THEY MUST BE UNABLE TO SUPPORT ANY TYPE OF LIFE!
SO MANKIND MUST NEVER ATTEMPT TO COLONIZE THIS GALAXY... FOR IT WOULD BE USELESS!
AN ENTIRE GALAXY--UNFIT FOR THE HUMAN RACE!! WHAT A COLOSSAL LOSS!!
IF WE ONLY KNEW WHY?
WHY??
WHY?
BECAUSE--THAT--IS--THE--WAY--WE--WANT--IT!
NO, THE EXPEDITION HAD NOT FAILED! THERE WAS LIFE IN THE STRANGE, DISTANT GALAXY! BUT ALAS, ONE OF THE TRAGEDIES IS THAT SOMETIMES WE CANNOT SEE THAT WHICH IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US! AND SOMETIMES SUCH AN OVERSIGHT CAN COST MANKIND... A UNIVERSE!
3

THE END

STAN LEE presents

Letter

CREATURE FEATURES

Dear Marvel,

After waiting four issues, I have decided to write to you. I must congratulate you on the fine way you are handling THONGOR. You are following Lin Carter's books very closely, and I hope you continue to do so.

Artwise, I am afraid you are not doing your best. When Val Mayerik first drew Thongor, I disliked his art very much. I felt and still feel that Gray Morrow should be doing the strip. But, through the issues that followed, it appeared that Mayerik's art was beginning to improve. Some panels showed the makings of a great artist.

Upon reading CREATURES ON THE LOOSE #26, I have found many mistakes both in the coloring and the art: (1) Thongor's hair is black, not red. (2) Yelim Pelorvis, the arch-druid, is bald; he does not have hair, as pictured in #26. (3) The zemadar Thongor fought and slew was supposed to be red, not green, and had a barbed tail, not a pointed tail. (4) What happened to Druganda Thal's beard on page twenty-three? (By the way, the people of Tsargol do have eyeballs.)

You may consider this nitpicking, but I feel that attention to little details improves on the story. So please correct these mistakes.

All in all, though, C.O.T.L. #26 was a great issue, and I am looking forward to the day when Thongor has his own book. By the way, how about including a map of Lemuria in one of your future issues? And please change the name of the letters page (maybe to "The Lemurian Chronicles").

Craig Guillory
Route 1, Box 21
Opelousas, La. 70570

Actually, Craig, we have to admit that we do feel you were nitpicking overmuch—but we'll try to explain some of the "mistakes" you've spotted.

According to a letter we received from Mr. Lin Carter himself, Thongor's hair is indeed red. That's why we made the change. If you wanna argue with our Valkarthan bladesman's creator, go ahead, but—!

Yelim Pelorvis was drawn with hair so that he would not be confused with the skin-headed Druganda Thal—a variance with Mr. Carter's original story necessitated by the difference in media.

As for Druganda Thal's missing beard—well, we'll give you your choice of a Valkarthan steel or Wilkinson Sword no-prize.

And did the color of the monster and the shape of its tail really matter that much?

Anyway, we're glad you're enjoying the THONGOR series, and we hope you'll continue to do so, despite the fact that Steve Gerber and Vicente Alcazar have made even further changes both on the original and on the Marvel version of the tale—such as Vicente's redesigned version of the Nemedis. We know it can be confusing and frustrating to hang in there while a strip grows and takes shape, but we think in the end you'll find it worthwhile. Are we forgiven?

Dear Swordsmen and Sorcerers,

Your work on THONGOR in CREATURES #26 was, as usual, excellent! I won't flatter anyone by saying how beautifully Gardner Fox writes, or how wonderfully Val Mayerik draws, or how exquisitely Wayne Howard inks, or what a fine colorist Petra Goldberg is, or how admirably Charlotte Jetter letters, or how superior an editor Roy Thomas is, or how well Stan Lee signs his name. No, instead of praising everyone's fine talents, I will only say that the combined efforts of this assemblage, towards such a worthy goal, is greater than the sum of its parts.

There is only one small quirk in the masterpiece that I think will earn me a much-coveted no-prize. In the second to the last panel, the Sark was pierced through the front of the heart by Thongor's sword. Yet, in the last panel, after the Sark had fallen off his platform, the sword is sticking out of his back. Now, I know Thongor is a truly great swordsman, but this is impossible. So please send me my no-prize, for I at least deserve nothing for writing this letter.

Terry Kostiuk
(no address given)

Uh, Terry...much as we'd like to dispatch that no-prize to you, we can't until we know your address! Drop us a line and tell us where you are, okay? And we'll send you two no-prizes—one from the front and one from the back!

Dear Marvel,

"Groovy" is the only word for CREATURES ON THE LOOSE #26. The best part was when Thongor fought the woman-headed serpents. My congratulations to the writers and artists.

I'd also like to congratulate the creator of Thongor. His is a great addition to KULL, CONAN, and KA-ZAR. Who was he?

Keep up the good work.

Joe Huzior
164-23 90th St.
Howard Beach, N.Y. 11414

First of all, Joe, thanks for the kind words. We'll try to surpass, not just equal, the work we've done on THONGOR so far. That's a promise.

As for Thongor's creator...he's not a "was", he's an "is"! Lin Carter, alive and well in Hollis, New York, is the man who gave life to Thongor and his lost land of Lemuria. But his credits don't stop there. He's also the author of several non-fiction works (including the highly recommended H. P. Lovecraft: A Look Behind The Cthulhu Mythos and Tolkien: A Look Behind "The Lord of the Rings") as well as two other heroic fantasy series, Jandar Of Callisto, available in paperback from Dell Books, and the "Green Star" series, also available currently from DAW Books. (Totally off the subject, that same publisher will be issuing a certain Gerard F. Conway's newest novel Mindship sometime around February, 1974. Watch for it.)

In addition to all that, Mr. Carter has also edited several collections of fantasy and science fiction stories and has collaborated with L. Sprague de Camp in filling in the missing chapters in the saga of Robert E. Howard's immortal Conan The Barbarian (who also stars in his own Marvel mag, natch), in the various paperbacks about that character.

So now you know who Lin Carter is. And we're exhausted.

So we'll bid you goodbye until next ish. And remember, as they used to say in Lemuria: Father Gorm delivers!

THIS IS IT! YOUR

MARVEL VALUE STAMP

FOR THIS ISSUE!

CLIP 'EM AND COLLECT 'EM!